United Nations A/73/143

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 July 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session

Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the seventy-third session

Safeguarding ocean space for present and future generations

Letter dated 12 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, on behalf of the Government of Malta and in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion of an item entitled "Safeguarding ocean space for present and future generations" in the provisional agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

In accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum concerning my Government's request is attached hereto (see annex).

(*Signed*) Carmelo **Inguanez**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-11773 (E) 230718

Please recycle

Annex

Explanatory memorandum

1. One of the main goals of the 1967 Malta proposal on the law of the sea to the General Assembly was to ensure that problems of ocean space were dealt with on a holistic basis in the interest of present and future generations. This goal received widespread support and is reflected in the preamble to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, wherein the States parties declare that they are conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole, using an integrated approach.

2. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, known as the constitution for the oceans, remains the cornerstone of global ocean governance. It has set up a legal order which facilitates international communications and promotes peaceful uses of the oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the conservation of living resources. Furthermore, with an impressive 168 States parties, many of its norms reflect customary international law.

3. While the Convention recognizes, directly and indirectly, that the problems of ocean space have to be considered as a whole, its general provisions do not effectively ensure that problems related to ocean space are dealt with in an integrated manner. The Convention has been supplemented by numerous valuable legal instruments adopted under the aegis of the United Nations and other international organizations. This process, while contributing greatly to various aspects of global ocean governance, deals with ocean space issues on a sectoral basis. Furthermore, most discussions taking place in international organizations, other than the United Nations, focus on the sectoral implementation of specific provisions of the Convention that fall within their mandate.

4. That approach is inherently fragmented and makes it difficult to deal with problems of ocean space as a whole, inhibiting the development of an effective and sustainable global ocean governance. To address this fragmentation, the international community has, in various instruments, recognized the need for an integrated approach to address the problems of ocean space in a coherent, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and integrated manner.

5. There is therefore a need to devise an integrated global strategy under the direction of the General Assembly to review and examine the current fragmented approaches to ocean governance and advise the General Assembly on the rationalization and coordination of these efforts.

6. The Government of Malta proposes that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to consider the possibility of the establishment of an appropriate mechanism or panel which could consider and coordinate, in consultation with the Special Envoy for the Ocean, the valuable and relevant work being undertaken by the competent organs and programmes within the United Nations system and outside the United Nations framework, to make recommendations with a view to providing options to the General Assembly on how a global strategy to ensure that all problems of ocean space are effectively considered as a whole, and to promote the realization of a more sustainable and effective ocean governance in the interest of present and future generations.